



# For the Sake of the Game: Stories Inspired by the Sherlock Holmes Canon

*Laurie R. King (Editor) , Leslie S. Klinger (Editor)*

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**For the Sake of the Game: Stories Inspired by the Sherlock Holmes Canon** Laurie R. King (Editor) ,  
Leslie S. Klinger (Editor)

In a sensational follow-up to *Echoes of Sherlock Holmes* and *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes*, a brand-new anthology of stories inspired by the Arthur Conan Doyle canon.

*For the Sake of the Game* is the latest volume in the award-winning series from *New York Times* bestselling editors Laurie R. King and Leslie S. Klinger, with stories of Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, and friends in a variety of eras and forms. King and Klinger have a simple formula: ask some of the world's greatest writers—regardless of genre—to be inspired by the stories of Arthur Conan Doyle.

The results are surprising and joyous. Some tales are pastiches, featuring the recognizable figures of Holmes and Watson; others step away in time or place to describe characters and stories influenced by the Holmes world. Some of the authors spin whimsical tales of fancy; others tell hard-core thrillers or puzzling mysteries. One beloved author writes a song; two others craft a melancholy graphic tale of insectoid analysis.

This is not a volume for readers who crave a steady diet of stories about Holmes and Watson on Baker Street. Rather, it is for the generations of readers who were themselves inspired by the classic tales, and who are prepared to let their imaginations roam freely.

Featuring Stories by: Peter S. Beagle, Rhys Bowen, Reed Farrel Coleman, Jamie Freveletti, Alan Gordon, Gregg Hurwitz, Toni L. P. Kelner, William Kotzwinkle and Joe Servello, Harley Jane Kozak, D. P. Lyle, Weston Ochse, Zoe Sharp, Duane Swierczynski, and F. Paul Wilson.

## For the Sake of the Game: Stories Inspired by the Sherlock Holmes Canon Details

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Canon Laurie R. King (Editor) , Leslie S. Klinger (Editor)**

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## From Reader Review For the Sake of the Game: Stories Inspired by the Sherlock Holmes Canon for online ebook

**Marlene says**

Originally published at Reading Reality

Welcome to my review of the biennial collection of Sherlock Holmes-inspired stories edited by Laurie R. King and Leslie S. Klinger. This is an every two years treat, as evidenced by my reviews of the previous collections in this quasi-series, *A Study In Sherlock*, *In the Company of Sherlock Holmes* and *Echoes of Sherlock Holmes*.

The stories in all of these collections were inspired by Holmes, one way or another, and are commissioned for the collections. And like all collections, they are a bit of a mixed bag. The game, however, is definitely afoot, both in stories that feel like they could be part of the original canon, and in stories that take their inspiration from the Great Detective without necessarily featuring him in either his Victorian guise or a more contemporary one.

I have several favorites in this year's collection, one each to reflect the different aspects of Holmesiana that are represented here.

My favorite story in the manner of the master himself *The Case of the Missing Case* by Alan Gordon. It takes place before the canon begins, when Mycroft is still working his way up the government ladder, and Sherlock, in his very early 20s, has not yet taken up rooms with Watson. And is not yet quite as sure of himself and his methods as he will later become. It actually fits quite nicely into the period between the excellent Mycroft and Sherlock by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Anna Whitehouse, and the beginning of the official canon in *A Study in Scarlet*.

In this story we see a very young Sherlock justifying his continuing presence in London to the consternation of his parents and the absolute chagrin of brother Mycroft by solving the case of a missing violinist and saving his brother's life. This story also provides a rather lovely explanation for Sherlock's acquisition of his famous Stradivarius.

This collection has relatively few Holmesian stories set in the Victorian era. Most are either modern variations of Holmes – or modern detectives, whether amateur or professional, who use Holmes' methods.

Of the contemporary Holmes stories, I can't decide between *Hounded* by Zoe Sharp and *The Ghost of the Lake* by Jamie Freveletti. They are such completely different versions of the 21st century Holmes that choosing between them is impossible.

*Hounded* by Zoe Sharp is so much fun because it is a contemporary reworking of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. It shows just how timeless the canon can be, by transplanting from the 19th century to the 21st and still making it all, including the ghostly hound, work.

*The Ghost of the Lake*, on the other hand, is a 21st century version of Holmes that owes a lot to both *Elementary* and *Sherlock* without feeling like an imitation of either. In this story, Sherlock Holmes is a 21st century operative for a secret British government department who has come to Chicago to prevent the kidnapping of an American national security specialist who has plenty of tricks up her own sleeve – and who is every bit Holmes' equal in every way.

I liked, not only the portrayal of Holmes in this story, but also the character of Dr. Hester Regine. And I loved the trip down memory lane to Chicago, my favorite of all of the places that we have lived.

Last but not least, the story that took the phrase “inspired by Sherlock Holmes” to new heights. And depths. And several places in between. That would be *The Adventure of the Six Sherlocks* by Toni L.P. Kelner. This story both spoofs the love of Holmes and celebrates it at the same time, as its amateur detectives find themselves using Sherlock Holmes’ own methods to investigate a murder at a convention of Sherlock Holmes fans.

The story reminds me a bit of *Bimbos of the Death Sun* by Sharyn McCrumb, where an author is murdered at a science fiction convention – but if “*Six Sherlocks*” uses that book as a springboard, it’s a very light spring.

Even the idea of a cooking show featuring actors portraying Holmes and Watson is hilarious. But when someone murders “Holmes” at the Sherlock Holmes convention, there are too many pretend Sherlocks and nearly not enough real ones to crack the case. This one is a light and fun send up of fan conventions in general and Sherlock Holmes mania in particular as well as being a cute mystery.

Escape Rating B+: Overall I enjoyed this collection. There were a couple of stories that just weren’t quite my cuppa, and one or two where it felt like they were a bit too far off the Holmesian tangent to be in this collection.

I read it in a day, finding myself getting so caught up in each story that I almost finished before I knew it. If you like Holmes or Holmes-like or Holmes-lite stories, this collection is every bit as much of a treat as its predecessors.

Of all the stories in all these collections, the one that still haunts me is from the first one, *A Study in Sherlock*. It’s *The Case of Death and Honey* by Neil Gaiman, and it’s the one that I still most want to be true.

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## **Bookreporter.com Mystery & Thriller says**

With their fourth Sherlock Holmes short story collection, authors Laurie R. King and Leslie S. Klinger have put together something special. *FOR THE SAKE OF THE GAME* features stories inspired by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famed detective, but not necessarily starring him. This allows for the writers of these tales to be as creative as possible, and the end result is some wonderful and quite unique entries.

The book’s title comes from “*The Adventure of the Bruce-Partington Plans*,” in which Holmes informs his older brother Mycroft that he is not interested in being honored or recognized for his work. Instead, he plays the game for the game's own sake. I am happy to say that these authors really took that quote to heart. I will now highlight a few of the tales that particularly stood out for me.

F. Paul Wilson gives us “*The Adventure of the Abu Qir Sapphire*.” Unlike most Holmes stories, Dr. Watson does not serve as the narrator; instead, the story comes directly from the mouth of the detective himself. The international intrigue presented by the *Abu Qir Sapphire* provides a lot of fun. In “*The Walk-In*” by Harley Jane Kozak, the narrator walks into her brother's apartment to find a dog she does not recognize. This canine becomes the center of a tale involving a charlatan psychic who has done something to the gentleman that his sister will have to puzzle out to save the day.

Rhys Bowen’s “*Sherlocked*” introduces us to the concept of a robot detective named Sherlock, who is assisting the police force and CSI team. However, Sherlock may end up providing help in areas originally

not thought of, making for an interesting crime fighter. Reed Farrel Coleman uses a variation of A STUDY IN SCARLET for "A Study in Absence," in which Holmes is dealing with a book titled *The Absent Man* by Isaac Masters Knott. He offers up that the writer is I.M. Knott, thereby discovering that the actual author remains a mystery. This ruse called to mind the name "U.N. Owen," or "Unknown," utilized in Dame Agatha Christie's AND THEN THERE WERE NONE.

A unique entry here is the story told in the form of a comic book, "The Case of the Naked Butterfly," by William Kotzwinkle and Joe Servello. In this illustrated tale, Holmes is represented as a praying mantis, and all the supporting players are from the insect world. In "Buy a Bullet," Gregg Hurwitz uses characters from his *Orphan X* series and sets them up with a complex situation that provides a solution worthy of the great Sherlock Holmes. "Tough Guy Ballet" by Duane Swierczynski is set in 1987 Los Angeles and finds a tough guy police detective called out to assist his partner. Instead, he spots a 19-year-old girl taking down a bad guy in swift fashion. What our narrator does not realize is that this super teen is not all who she claims to be.

Being a huge Holmes fan myself, I was especially wowed by the last story, "Hounded" by Zoë Sharp, who brilliantly inserts her protagonist, Charlotte "Charlie" Fox, directly into THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES. It's great fun to see Charlie interacting with Holmes, Watson, Lord Baskerville and all the characters from the original tale. Charlie is no slouch and has been referred to as Jack Reacher if he was a woman. This is a terrific final entry in a worthy collection that should please all Sherlock Holmes enthusiasts far and wide.

Reviewed by Ray Palen

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### **Amy says**

Excellent - a diverse collection in format, settings, and Holmes characters. I especially liked the ones by Zoe Sharp, Harley Jane Kozak, Alan Gordon, and Jamie Freveletti, but there wasn't a single story I didn't enjoy!

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### **Patrick Ewing says**

Outstanding.

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### **Sarah says**

There were a couple of pretty decent stories in here- *The Case of the Missing Case* by Alan Gordon had a good young Sherlock and Mycroft, *Hounded* by Zoe Sharp did a good modernization of Hound of the Baskervilles (and included the author's own character), and *The Case of the Naked Butterfly* by William Kotzwinkle and Joe Servello was a totally surreal comic of insect Holmes & Watson.

But a lot of them were only tangentially related to Sherlock Holmes, or were oddly characterized, or just weren't that compelling.

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## **Linda Baker says**

Following two earlier anthologies, *Echoes of Sherlock Holmes* and *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes*, this new anthology features stories inspired by the Holmes Canon. It features stories by some of the best-known authors of today. Peter S. Beagle, Reed Farrell Coleman, Jamie Freveletti, Alan Gordon, Gregg Hurwitz, Toni L.P. Kelner, William Kotzwinkle and Joe Servello, Harley Jane Kozak, D.P. Lyle, Weston Ochse, Zoe Sharp, Duane Swierczynski, and F. Paul Wilson all put their own stamp on the Sherlock Holmes character. This is not an anthology for Holmes purists, placing Holmes not only in multiple times and genres, as well as genders. I am not one of the purists as far as Holmes is concerned.

I enjoyed some of the stories more than others so I will concentrate on three that I found particularly delightful. *The Case of the Missing Case* by Alan Gordon places a young Sherlock and brother Mycroft in London before their respective careers really took off. Sherlock is trying to justify his choice of career to disapproving parents and barely getting by, but actually finds himself taken in by the theatrical wiles of a young woman. *Hounded*, by Zoe Sharp is inspired by my favorite of all Holmes stories, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Set in the modern day, it has all the spooky atmosphere of the original with several new twists. Third of my favorites is *The Ghost of the Lake* by Jamie Freveletti, which puts Holmes into the 21st century with a female Watson. The two are trying to recover a missing security operative from a terrorist group and our female Watson equals Holmes in brains and skill.

This is a very enjoyable anthology and I thank Pegasus Books and NetGalley for an advance digital copy. The opinions are my own.

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## **Ray Palen says**

Read my review this Friday on [bookreporter.com](http://bookreporter.com).

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## **Jan says**

I really enjoyed all the different settings, dates, crimes, etc.

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## **Elisabeth Hayden says**

Not enough Laurie in the book.

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## **Wendy Hellwig says**

Thoroughly enjoyable -- interesting range of stories including a graphic version starring bugs.

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